

## The New Boy

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# The New Boy

by [TigerPrawn](#)

## Summary

Nigel recently moved to a new school after being kicked out of the last five he'd attended. He just wants to keep his head down and get through senior year so his parents will let him work in their profitable family business. When he's asked to play guide to another new student - strange little Adam Raki - he thinks he might have found help in passing his classes. If he can keep his mind on his studies around his new friend...

## Notes

I usually write everything all up and then post bit by bit, especially as my stories tend to have a set beginning, middle and end. With this one I am just posting as and when I write it, so I have no idea when the next post will be other than when inspiration strikes. This is because I am just seeing where this one goes and not planning it out in the same way I usually do, also, just had a baby so writing time is limited and I am currently trying to complete another Hannigram to post, the next installment of my spacedogs California series and a Tristhad story for Tristhad week :-/

Sorry, I haven't had chance to properly go back over it so let me know if there are mistakes.

Your patience, kudos and comments are very welcome :)

# The New Boy

Nigel was used to being given “one last chance” and so far he had learned there seemed to always be at least one more. So far. He had to be on his fiftieth one last chance, and was now on his sixth school. Senior year, that’s all he had to get through. If he could, then his parents would set him up with a job - going full time at their club. He’d be able to make his own money and screw all this shit, but only if he completed high school. His parents hadn’t had the chance at a great education, they’d moved to America for a better life for him which they felt he seemed determined to throw away. But the truth was he didn’t need school. He didn’t mind learning, didn’t mind a lot about school - he just knew his talents lay elsewhere. He was more of a physical person. Not that he could explore that at school. His low attendance and poor report card meant he hadn’t been allowed to join any of the sports teams, so what was the fucking point. He just had to get through senior year, preferably without pissing his parents off with another expulsion.

“Nigel!” He hadn’t heard the first two times Ms Smith had said his name, but now it was firm and she looked pissed and sort of doubtful, like she was about to make a huge mistake. Hopefully she wasn’t about to call him up to solve the math problem on the board, fuck knows that would be pointless for everyone involved.

“Yeah...” He acknowledged and saw her face burn a little with frustration. He couldn’t help it, he seemed to have this affect on most adults and all teachers. He was a fucking nightmare, he knew it, but didn’t spend much time thinking about it much less working out how to correct it. He just had to make it through senior year.

It was as the muscle in her jaw tightened that he saw a scrawny kid standing next to her. He looked fidgety, skittish. He was wringing his hands and looking around the room nervously but focusing on nothing. Nigel didn’t recognise him, he was sure of it. And yet his mind was racing to try and remember if he’d beat the kid up at some point and the shit was about to hit the fan. Just make it the fuck through senior year! No, he didn’t know this kid, but even so if he said Nigel had hit him or taken his lunch money, who were they going to believe. Wouldn’t be the first little shit who had taken advantage of his shitty reputation.

“Nigel, I shall repeat for your benefit as you clearly had more important things on your mind...” a snicker from the classroom was silenced by Ms Smith’s glare. “Adam has just transferred here and needs someone to show him around. As you’re our most recent arrival I thought you’d...” her words trailed off as she no doubt realised the massive mistake she’d made.

Nigel, as always saw an angle. “For extra credit?” he asked.

Smith sighed and folded her arms, clearly wishing she hadn’t ventured down this route. For the sake of a peaceful life it would seem, she gave a curt nod of agreement. The bell rang a few seconds later and Nigel hung back to collect his new charge, ignoring the smirk from Darko, the only friend he’d made since starting in this school and that was only because their parents knew each other through business.

The classroom cleared and Nigel headed towards the door and looked back to see the new boy hadn't moved. "Hey kid, you coming."

The kid's eyes seemed to roam the entire room, looking everywhere but at Nigel. Nigel drew in a deep breath - this was going to be harder than he thought. The boy hurried to his side, his eyes now averted to the floor.

"My name is Adam." He barely heard the boy.

"What?" Nigel was already out the door but the kid was on his heels like a well trained hound.

"My name isn't kid, it's Adam."

"Oh, um. Ok." Nigel was unsure what to make of that. This was going to be hard work and it was only end of first period.

\*

Adam was forming a second opinion of his guide, Nigel. When they were in class Nigel had seemed distracted and then had asked for extra credit - Adam assumed that he was a good student - lost in thoughts about the class and desiring extra credit. But he quickly realised he was wrong. His second opinion of his classmate was that the opposite seemed to be true - he had not paid any attention in class and the extra credit was perhaps to make up for this.

Nigel had given him a quick tour of the school but with little detail and no patience when Adam asked for it. They didn't even really talk until Nigel lead them out to the empty quad and lit a cigarette. Adam tried to look at people as much as he could, he knew averting his eyes bothered people, but this was the first time he really looked at Nigel, so shocked was he that the boy had lit a cigarette on school grounds. Nigel caught his eye and grinned at him.

Adam averted his eyes immediately and couldn't help an involuntary smile that even he was unsure about. Was it a conspiratorial smile - he'd never broken the rules like this before. Or was it because of the strange, warm feeling he felt in his belly when Nigel smiled at him? He still wasn't sure about Nigel, but he had a soothing accented voice and aesthetically he was very nice to look at - almost blonde hair fell a little messy over his forehead, his eyes were dark and fierce, his face was full of pleasant sharp angles that Adam was sure were designed by a mathematician. As he thought this he glanced to see Nigel looking at him curiously, a blush heating his face as he averted his eyes again.

"So... uh, what's your story?" Nigel asked.

"Um... I don't understand the question." Adam admitted shyly.

"Oh... well, how come you moved school? Did your parents move?"

"My mum is dead. My dad didn't move." Adam provided helpfully. "I didn't... um, I didn't fit in at my last school. I was bullied, I got beat up a lot. My cousin Will goes here so my dad hoped he would look out for me."

“Oh, well, that sucks. Why did people bully you?”

“I’m different. People think I’m weird...”

“We’re all a little weird, darling.” Nigel drawled at him, the accent turned the words into a purr that sent a shiver down Adam’s spine that he didn’t even think to hide from Nigel.

“I have this thing, autism...”

“We all have hang ups, no need for people to beat on you for it...” Nigel interrupted. Adam found himself looking up and sharing another smile with the boy.

“Why did you move school?” Adam asked. He rarely remembered to ask others about themselves but found himself curious about Nigel.

“Lots of fights, bad grades, bad attitude... Bit late in the day to try and change anything, just want to get through senior year.”

“Um, I have good grades. I don’t like that I had to move school, I didn’t do anything wrong. Will said he would look after me, but we don’t have a lot of classes together. I think my dad will worry about that.” Adam replied.

“Will? I probably don’t know him, I’ve only been here a couple of months. Like to keep to myself.” Nigel took in a drag of the cigarette.

“His boyfriend doesn’t go here, he goes to a private school, but he’s nice too.”

“Oh.”

“Will likes fishing and dogs, and his mum isn’t around either...” Adam cut himself off realising he was starting to get carried away. “Will’s my friend.” He concluded instead.

“Well, if you’re... I could look out for you if you want to help me with my grades...”

“Sure.” Adam replied as Nigel stubbed out the remains of his cigarette.

\*

Nigel wasn’t sure what had happened.

As they walked back from the quad he realised he had a smile on his face, which he quickly dropped in an effort to maintain his image. This Adam was an odd one, he wasn’t wrong. Nigel didn’t know what autism was but intended to look it up as soon as he got home. He was strangely drawn to this kid. His speech was monotone and he seemed a little obsessive and yet his smile, when it happened, was like a ray of fucking sunshine that Nigel had rarely seen in his life. It helped that the smile was framed in an angelic face, topped with chocolate curls that made Nigel want to run a hand through them.

He shook his head, telling himself that it was a good deal - he’d keep the bullies at bay and Adam would help ensure he made it through the year - that was the goal. Finish senior year.

But he knew there was more to it than that, from the first smile. He was a fucking idiot for a nice smile - that's how he ended up in all that trouble with Gabi two schools ago. He was pretty sure it could be a worse deal and he'd want to spend more time with Adam.

"Fuck." Nigel muttered under his breath, before looking over and sharing another small smile with Adam before the boy looked away again. Yup, he was a gonner.

# Will and Hannibal

## Chapter Summary

A bit of background on Will and Hannibal's relationship and how Will deals with Adam's new friendship with Nigel.

“Nigel? The Romanian kid?” Will asked with a frown as they walked towards the exit. He'd barely seen Adam all day, which he felt sort of bad about until Adam had said he'd made a friend. Now he felt shitty to have to be the one to let Adam down gently. “I think maybe he was teasing you Adam. Nigel isn't a nice guy, he's a bully. He beats up kids like you.”

Adam frowned. “He wants to finish senior year. He asked me to help him study...”

Will could see where this was going - Nigel would take advantage of Adam's lack of social nounce to make a fool of him in front of that idiot Darko. Or perhaps make Adam think they were friends so he could convince him to give him his lunch money and the like - an insidious sort of bullying that Adam might not pick up on. Either way, Will was sure Nigel had some shitty reason to apparently befriend his cousin - he was a bully and nothing more. Will knew that much from what he'd heard about the guy, and he'd only just started at the beginning of the school year a couple of months ago - a short time to already earn such a reputation.

Will turned to Adam. “Listen buddy, I'm not sure what he's playing at but he's not a nice guy and I promised your dad I'd look out for you, so I want you to stay away from him ok?”

Adam's frown deepened but then he slowly nodded, as Will knew he would - he trusted Will.

They stopped outside the school gates and waited for Hannibal to pull up in one of his dad's bentleys.

Hannibal gave Will a curious look as the cousins got in the car - Adam unusually quiet in the back. Will shook his head ever so slightly to indicate Hannibal should just leave it, Hannibal frowned but gave a curt nod.

“Adam's had eventful first day.” Will commented carefully as they pulled away. Looking back, he could see Adam was already in his own world as he looked out the window, watching the school recede.

Hannibal cleared his throat but said nothing on the subject. “So Will, did your principal confirm whether you could bring outside guests to homecoming?”

Will smiled and leaned across to kiss Hannibal's cheek. “She said it wasn't usual but unsurprisingly agreed when I mentioned who I wanted to bring.”

Will smiled as Hannibal gave a slight smirk and a curt nod. He wasn't sure sometimes how he got so lucky to end up with Hannibal. They had met a year earlier in the park when Will's dog Winston had run passed Hannibal and splashed muddy puddle water all over the boy and his sketch pad as he chased the ball Will had thrown.

*Will had felt his face redden as he grabbed Winston and apologised profusely to the sullen young man. Hannibal had been polite, insisting there was no problem as he placed his sketch pad away and excused himself. Will had felt terrible at the time and then sort of relieved when he saw the boy a few days later sitting in the same place sketching. He could see now that he was sketching the semi-nude statue in the fountain at the centre of the park. He threw the ball away from the fountain and moved to the bench, hesitating a little before sitting down.*

*He cleared his throat "I'm sorry my dog ruined your sketch..." he started. The other boy didn't look up immediately but instead finished the curve he was drawing.*

*"No need, no harm done." the boy had said before looking up and then smiling.*

*Will couldn't help but return the smile. The boy had practically purred at him with a thick accent which sent an involuntary shiver through Will.*

*For the next few weeks they seemed to run into each other in the park a lot. They became friends as they shared the details of their lives - Will the son of a mechanic, interested in forensics and law; Hannibal the son of a Lithuanian count (old money they called it in America), attending a private school and hoping to attend medical school.*

*It was an easy silence they shared on one occasion that Will suddenly realised he couldn't take any more of the slight distance that remained - instead blurting out that he and Winston sometimes spent hours in the park in the hopes that Hannibal would show up. Hannibal had laughed gently and replied that it explained why the dog looked so often tired, before admitting to the same. Will had found himself blushing then, even before Hannibal had leaned in, hands cupping Will's face and drawing him into a chaste kiss. The first of many and much more as the boys got to know each other in every way over the coming months.*

"Father does contribute a lot to the local economy, perhaps he might be interested in donating money to the school in return as gratitude." Hannibal smiled, a slight edge to his tone and smile that came with being the sort of wealthy people liked to keep company with - Will knew. They had discussed it at length before, Will often uncomfortable about their different situations in life and never wanting Hannibal or his family to think he had ulterior motives in being with Hannibal.

When they dropped Adam off he was still quiet, tugging at Will's heart. He was used to Adam's quirks - his self-comforting, occasional outbursts - all the things that came with his autism. Being quiet was never a good sign with Adam - he was processing the situation, it was obviously something that troubled him deeply. Will wanted to punch Nigel in the face. He had completely taken Adam in, and now Adam would have to deal with it - something he didn't find as easy as others might.

Nigel was surprised when Adam ignored him in class, he'd even rushed off after each lesson before Nigel could get to talk to him. At first he thought it was strange, but then when lunch rolled around and he found Adam sitting with a couple of others in the quad, their looks made it clear. The boy who looked like a slightly older, worldlier and scruffier Adam must be his cousin Will, the Asian girl was maybe his girlfriend - and both stared daggers at him as they saw him approach.

The other boy was on his feet and intercepted Nigel before he could get to Adam.

"I don't know what you're playing at, but you leave Adam alone, understand?" The boy, Will, growled the words out quietly so that Adam wouldn't hear.

Confused and a little amused by the boy he could easily squash. "I just wanted to talk to Adam..."

"No. Stay away from him." Will moved to completely block his path.

Nigel tried to look past him and received only a glare from the girl and a view of Adam's back. He wasn't sure what had happened, what Adam might have said, but he found it caused a pang of hurt in his chest. Stupid to imagine he'd made a friend of someone so sweet and clever. He didn't let it show, instead flashing a nonchalant grin and Will and shrugging as if it meant nothing in the world to him. He hid the truth deep as he turned and walked away trying not to think of Adam's wonderful smile.

# Bullies

## Chapter Summary

Will tries to convince Adam to go to Homecoming, and Nigel still wants to help Adam.

## Chapter Notes

Inspiration has struck and the baby is sleeping, so here's another chapter. I have another one in my head that I will hopefully get down on \*paper\* in the next day or two :D

Posting in a hurry so there may be mistakes :-/

“I don’t want to go Will.” Adam said firmly, not looking up from the book he sat reading on his bed.

Will sighed and dropped down onto the bed next to his cousin.

“It’s homecoming Adam, it’s a rite of passage.” Will told him.

Adam set aside his book and glared at Will. “You hate stuff like that, you already told me you’re only going so you can take Hannibal and go to the hotel he’s booked for the night after. Besides, I don’t have anyone to go with. I don’t have any friends.” Adam said flatly.

“That’s not true, you have me.”

“You’re my cousin, you have to be my friend.”

“Ok, Bev, Brian and Jimmy then!”

“They’re your friends.” Adam picked his book back up again, he didn’t want to talk about school. He hated school. It was only marginally better than his previous schools in that he wasn’t bullied. But he still had no friends, no real grasp of the seemingly complex social world of teenagers that did nothing but confuse him.

Will muttered something that Adam didn’t hear, having purposely switched off. He didn’t really notice when his cousin left the room. He was just glad not to talk about homecoming, he had no interest in going and couldn’t imagine why anyone would.

\*

Nigel held Frederick by the throat against his locker, having just slammed the smaller boy into it.

“I told you already Freddy, and I’m not going to tell you again.” Nigel growled. Frederick Chilton tried to nod, only able to get his words out through coughs once Nigel let him down.

“What’s it to you anyway.” He spat with indignation. “He’s just some dumb kid, he’s completely mental. It’s not like we were going to go full Carrie on him...” He stopped, he must have registered Nigel’s look.

“I thought I made myself clear. No one even thinks about picking on Adam Raki! If I hear again that you’ve been trying to plot some fucking idiot scheme for the amusement of your friends I will break you in fucking two. You understand?”

Freddy nodded eagerly, rubbing his neck as he retreated.

Nigel shook it off and walked outside. He made his way to the edge of the sport track and pulled out a cigarette. It was lunchtime, he knew Adam sometimes sat in the far bleachers at lunchtime. He had been at the school almost a month now and Nigel was getting to know his schedule. He kept his distance, even in the classes they shared. He had to - the one time he had seen Adam on his own outside class and tried to approach him, he had looked terrified. It broke Nigel’s heart that every step closer seemed to deeply agitate Adam, in the end he had backed off and let the boy be. He could only imagine the stories he’d heard about him - most of which had followed Nigel from his old schools thanks to Darko and some of which were exaggerated. He’d mostly kept his nose clean at this school, at least until three weeks ago when he had started beating up on the other bullies once he got wind that they were going to go after Adam. A kid like him was an easy target, and despite their deal not going ahead, Nigel couldn’t not keep up his side of it. He wasn’t going to let any of them touch a hair on his head if he could fucking help it.

He stood in the shadows smoking as he watched Adam take a seat on his own and pull out a book and his lunch. Adam came here on the days he wasn’t eating in the quad with Will and his friends. He wouldn’t dare watch Adam in the quad - it would upset Will which might risk upsetting Adam. He’d read up about autism the day he met Adam and knew he didn’t want to upset his would be friend.

He was reading a book about the solar system. This was a different one to two days ago, when he’d been reading one by that science guy in a wheelchair with the mechanical voice. Adam seemed to read that one pretty quickly - he liked reading about the universe and stars and shit. Maybe he was going to be an astronaut. Nigel wondered what Adam might study at college. He often imagined the sort of things they could talk about, the questions he could ask - he was curious for the first time about anyone. He hadn’t even really been curious about Gabi, she’d just had a nice smile and he vaguely remembered she’d liked music. That all seemed like a world away now. She’d accused him of being obsessive and as he stood watching Adam, he knew she wasn’t wrong.

\*

“Adam, I can’t believe you’re not coming tomorrow. Jimmy will go with you, he doesn’t have a date, he was just going to third wheel with me and Brian.” Bev told him. They had just sat down in the quad for lunch but Will hadn’t arrived yet.

Adam really liked Will’s best friend Bev, she was super nice and what Will called “sassy”. She told Will off a lot, which he also liked. But this he did not like.

“I don’t want to go. I don’t like big gatherings and lots of noise...”

“But it’s at the school, you come here every day. There will just be music, you like music...”

“Some...”

“Look Adam, Will asked me to convince you to come. If you don’t he’ll be really mad at me.” She smiled. Adam heard the lilt to her voice but wasn’t sure how to interpret it, maybe she was joking?

“Ok...” He agreed hesitantly, feeling a little railed into it.

“Great. Will said you can borrow one of his suits, you’re only a little slighter than him. He said he’ll bring it to school tomorrow and then he and Hannibal will collect you in the evening on their way to the school. You want me to ask Jimmy to collect you instead?” Bev was talking really fast and it was all Adam could do to shake his head.

“I’ll... I’ll go with Will.” He replied, tapping his hand against his thigh as his anxiety rose. “Um, I’m... I have to do something...” He told her, packing away his lunch and walking off. He needed to get away and just have some quiet time on his own. He went to his spot on the bleachers and sat quietly, wondering if Nigel was watching him - he knew the other boy sometimes stood under the other side of the bleachers for a cigarette. He had noticed him the second time he’d sat here, and though it was now getting colder, he still came back just in case Nigel was there. He had hoped at first that Nigel might come and say hello - he’d been ignoring him since after their first meeting - Will must have been right that Nigel wasn’t really genuine. Even so, he found the boy’s presence reassuring, just knowing he was there was something familiar to ground him when the noise of the school got too much.

He wasn’t sure if he was there today but the thought that he might be helped calm him. He wondered if Nigel might be at the homecoming.

\*

Will dropped down into the sofa.

“You’re late.” Mischa told him with the frown of an annoyed 8 year old.

“I am.” Will agreed with a nod. “I had to get my suit ready for tomorrow, and one for my cousin.” Will told her as they sat side by side. The dvd was on the startup menu and Hannibal was finishing off homemade popcorn. The Lecter parents were out at the opera, leaving Hannibal to baby sit Mischa and so continue their tradition of movie night with Will. After

the movie Mischa would go to bed leaving Hannibal and Will to make out in the TV room until the count and countess arrived home and Hannibal drove Will home.

“For homecoming?” Mischa asked.

“Yeah.” Will smiled.

“Annibal is looking forward to it.” She smiled back. Her accent was much thicker than the rest of the family, having been that much younger when they moved to America only a couple of years earlier.

“I am?” Hannibal asked, catching only the last few words as he entered the room.

“I hope so.” Will replied with a grin. “We’re talking about homecoming.”

“Ah.” Hannibal smiled and nodded. “Indeed I am.” He placed the popcorn on Mischa’s lap and started the movie.

“Oh, I forgot to, um, mention...” Will started a little bashfully as the film’s start up credits began. “Is it ok if Adam gets a lift with us to the dance?” He felt a bit bad springing it on Hannibal, even though he knew his boyfriend wouldn’t say no. He was fond of Adam and rarely turned Will down on any count.

Hannibal raised an eyebrow. “Of course, though I’m surprised Adam is going, I didn’t think it would be something he’d enjoy.”

Will rubbed the back of his neck, he did feel a little guilty, it really wasn’t Adam’s sort of thing. “I was hoping he might make more friends.”

“He was making friends Will, you told me, but you warned him off.”

“Nigel? Are you serious? He’s a bully, I was looking out for Adam.”

“Your ruining the movie!” Mischa pipped up with a whine. “What are you talking about anyway?”

“Will’s cousin made a friend that Will disapproves of.” Hannibal said with a smile.

Mischa laughed lightly and then spoke quickly to Hannibal in Lithuanian - a habit she had.

“Exactly.” Hannibal agreed.

“What?” Will asked, a little annoyed at not knowing what they were talking about.

“Mischa was reminding me how she disapproved of you when she first met you.” Hannibal replied with a grin.

“Oh.” Will was a little taken aback, he always thought Mischa liked him and they certainly got on very well.

“Yes.” Hannibal confirmed. “She saw the quality of your clothes and feared you were a pauper who was determined to seduce me for my wealth.”

“Quite the imagination.” Will commented as Mischa grinned at him.

“Not really. A reasonable concern. As is yours regarding Adam, but it doesn’t mean you’re correct.” Hannibal put it plainly with a gentle smile.

“So I should let Adam be friends with a bully?”

“You should let Adam decide.” Hannibal replied. “Have you spoken with him Will? He has made no friends at the school other than yours. This was the first friend he had really ever made and you put an end to it before you even knew the boy’s intentions.”

Will and Mischa huffed their disdain at the same time but for different reasons.

# Homecoming

## Chapter Summary

It's time for the homecoming dance!!

Adam took a last look in the mirror as his dad called to him again that Will and Hannibal were waiting outside in the car. The suit fit ok but it wasn't his, he would prefer to wear his own clothes but he knew they wouldn't be right for the event and Will might not like it after all the trouble he went to.

Knowing that Will and Hannibal would be with him quelled the panic he felt trying to rise, but even so he felt sad. He looked at his reflection and practiced a smile, unsure of how convincing it would be. Once out to the car he slipped quietly into the back seat and watched out the window.

"Hey Adam. You ok?" Will asked. Adam nodded, an automatic response he had learned over the years - when people asked that the response was yes, no matter how you really felt, they were just being polite, they didn't really want to know if you were ok.

"We can turn around if you don't want to attend, Adam." Hannibal told him. He liked Hannibal, his voice was soothing and he never lied. Sometimes he felt bad because he often liked Hannibal more than Will. Sometimes Will lied, but would say it was in his best interests. So far he seemed to be right, but Adam still didn't like it.

Adam shook his head. "Will said we won't stay long if I don't want to." He was determined to see this through for Will who had been certain it would be a good way for Adam to make friends. Adam wasn't sure he wanted to make any friends, it was too hard, but he would try for Will. Maybe Will wanted him to have his own friends so he would spend less time with him and Bev and Brian and Jimmy. That made sense.

He felt panic rise a little and his eyes start to sting with tears that threatened to break through.

\*

By the time they parked the car Will felt like shit. It had taken a day of thinking over what Hannibal and Mischa had said to realise he wasn't doing his best for Adam. He had meant to, but it was easy for him to forget that they weren't 8 years old any more and that Adam, in his own way, was a capable person. He still wasn't convinced he'd done the wrong thing with warning off Nigel, but he definitely shouldn't have bullied Adam into coming to the dance. He swallowed the lump in his throat at the realisation that he had basically bullied Adam. He felt like an asshole and hoped Adam would forgive him, and Hannibal wouldn't think less of him.

As they walked up to the school, Will turned to Adam and stopped him.

“We can take you home.” Will offered, resisting the urge to hug his sad looking cousin - Adam wasn’t always good with physical contact.

Adam shook his head, which hung down sadly. “No, you're right, I should make friends.” He continued to walk past Will and caught up with Hannibal who had continued slowly.

Inside they met up with Bev, Brian and Jimmy and found a table. Will got he and Hannibal and Adam drinks and sat down with his cousin as Bev and Brian took to the dance floor.

The evening moved slowly - Will and Hannibal had a couple of dances but Will felt bad leaving Adam sitting alone. Adam was right that the only reason Will had wanted to go was so that he could spend the evening with Hannibal and go to their hotel after. Even so, he thought he'd enjoy himself but really he was having a much fun as Adam - which appeared to be none at all.

He went to the dance floor for the third time with Hannibal, leaving Adam with Jimmy. Resting his head against Hannibal’s shoulder he muttered “I'm such an asshole.”

Hannibal let out a low chuckle. “Where Adam is concerned I won't argue with that. The path to hell, Will - you know what they say. Why don't we leave now - we can take Adam to the late night Observatory, you can apologise and then we will drop him home on the way to the hotel.”

Will looked into Hannibal’s eyes and smiled, pulling him into a kiss. “You're too good for me.” He breathed against Hannibal’s lips.

When they broke apart to move back to the table it was empty. Jimmy was at the punch bowl and there was no sign of Adam.

\*

Jimmy had talked to him for a bit, but Adam must have not been saying the right thing because he rushed off to get a drink. Adam was actually grateful for the time alone. It was difficult trying to keep up with conversations, especially ones often spoken in what Will called innuendo. Bev spoke that way a lot, maybe because she was sassy.

He was alone for a minute before a girl with vibrant red curly hair sat down next to him.

“You’re Adam.” She said with a bright smile.

“Yes, I am.” Adam answered.

There was a moment of silence where she was perhaps waiting for Adam to elaborate, when he didn’t, she continued. “I’m Freddie, you know Nigel right?”

“Yes.”

“Yeah, he, uh. He asked me to come find you. He says he really needs to talk to you. He’s in the bathroom.”

“Oh.” Adam was surprised but found he was happy that Nigel wanted to talk to him. Maybe he could slip away without Will knowing, as Will would likely be mad. He could ask Nigel why he ignored him when he clearly watched him all the time. His only doubt was that no matter what Nigel said, they couldn’t be friends because Will had said so. Maybe he could worry about that after he spoke to Nigel.

“Yeah, I can take you...” Freddie stood up. He stood up too and followed her out of the dance hall.

The bathroom was at the end of the corridor, and took less of a minute to reach, certainly not long enough for Adam to get any doubts, though he wished he had once he opens the door. Freddie doesn’t follow him in, but there are already people in there - none of whom are Nigel.

Adam is aware that someone steps behind him, blocking the door. In front of him is Frederick Chilton. He’s never met him but Will has pointed him out as someone to avoid - a skeezeball, Will called him. Someone who bullied people he thought he could get away with because he had low self esteem combined with a superiority complex - whatever that meant.

Adam feels stupid and sad, he shouldn’t have believed the girl - he knew better than that. People always lie. He prepared himself mentally for the blow he was expecting, he was no stranger to bullies.

“Adam! You my friend are such an interesting fellow.” Freddy started, moving forward and putting his arm around Adam’s shoulders, which made Adam flinch and want to withdraw from the contact. “Quite the stir you’re making with Nigel as your pet hound. He’s done a pretty good job of protecting you, but I have to tell you, that has only made people more eager to get the better of him. I knew he wouldn’t be here tonight, so when I saw you were... well! How wonderful!”

Adam didn’t really understand what Freddy meant, but was relieved when the boy stepped back from him.

“Maybe we’ll show Nigel he doesn’t run this school!” Freddy grinned. “Take off your jacket.”

Adam hesitated. These were Will’s clothes, but he also didn’t want to anger the bully, who so far seemed quite reasonable - normally he had been hit at least once by now. He slowly shrugged out of the jacket and another kid snatched it up and started to burn holes into it with a lighter.

“Freddy’s got it right - you must be Nigel’s bitch.” The other boy laughed, to which the others joined in. Freddy stepped forward again and took a marker pen from his pocket. He turned Adam roughly and started to write on his back. Adam could just make out the word in the mirror over his shoulder ‘bitch’.

All three boys were laughing now and Adam let his tears fall silently, too scared to say anything. Too scared to move even though he wanted to curl into a ball.

When Freddy was finished writing the other boy threw the ruined jacket back at Adam and then he was pushed back out into the corridor.

“Don’t forget to get your photo taken so Nigel can see how lovely you look tonight.” Freddy laughed again, another chorus of laughter.

Adam didn’t walk back to the dance hall but turned and ran down the hall to the exit.

\*

“Jimmy, where is Adam?” Will asked as they reached the table at the same time.

“Oh, I don’t know. He didn’t want any punch.” Jimmy answered, not really picking up on the concern in Will’s voice.

“Maybe he went to the bathroom.” Hannibal offered, putting a reassuring hand on Will’s shoulder. Will nodded and looked to the exit, just as Freddy Chilton and some of his idiot friends entered. They were laughing. Freddy spotted Will and laughed harder. Will’s stomach dropped - he had a bad feeling about this.

Will stalked over to Freddy before anyone knew what was happening, Hannibal quickly following.

“You seen Adam?” Will asked Freddy.

Freddy laughed again. “Oh, Nigel’s little bitch? Nope. You seen him boys?” He asked his friends, who all shook their heads whilst laughing.

“If you’ve done anything...” Will trailed off, his finger pointing in Freddy’s face.

“You’ll what Graham?” He laughed, pushing Will’s shoulder.

“Will.” Hannibal placed a hand on Will’s arm and drew him back before Will landed the punch he wanted to aim at Freddy’s mouth. He turned to Hannibal and they started to walk away.

“Always knew you were a pussy Graham. You and your pansy Eurotrash boyfriend.” Freddy laughed.

Will wasn’t sure what happened, it had happened so fast. One moment Hannibal was at his side, the next he had landed a punch to Freddy’s jaw and the boy had gone down. Hannibal stepped back to Will. “I think we should probably look for Adam now.” Hannibal told him as his jaw dropped.

“Hannibal!” Will was shocked and allowed Hannibal to lead him to the exit. “Is it wrong that that was totally hot?”

He saw the smirk that Hannibal tried to hide.

\*

Nigel heard the sobs but in the dark couldn't see immediately where they were coming from.

He hadn't planned on coming to Homecoming. Part of him wanted to in the hopes that Adam would be there but he wasn't sure how likely that was - it didn't seem like something he'd enjoy. He'd only found out earlier that day that Adam was definitely going when it came up in class and he overheard Adam mutter to Bev Katz about it before they had all be quietened by the teacher.

His heart had been in his throat, even though he knew that Adam would be there with Will and friends so he still was unlikely to talk to the boy. Even so, he had put on a relatively smart shirt with his jeans - the one with the dachshunds - and he had headed to the school an hour after the dance had started. He had even almost gone in, but then realised how pointless it would be. Instead he made his way to the bleachers, where Adam liked to sit, and just sat there like a fucking idiot, staring at a dark sports track.

When the sobbing started, he wasn't sure what it was at first - maybe an animal. It was only after a few minutes he realised someone was crying.

"Stupid, stupid, stupid. Dumb Adam!" He heard a small and distressed voice behind him. Nigel looked around and finally realised the person, Adam, was under the bleachers.

Nigel made his way down. "Adam? Are you ok?"

There was a moment of silence and then a whimper. Nigel automatically moved, making his way through the girder supports to the spot where Adam was sitting. He dropped down next to the kid, his hands were over his ears and he was rocking back and forth. Nigel had read about this but now was unsure what to do.

"Adam, do you want to talk about it?" Nigel offered as he sat beside Adam, who still hadn't looked his way.

"Dumb, stupid Adam!" He cried, one of his hands reaching up into his hair and tugging almost hard enough to pull it out by the roots.

"Adam." Nigel said with more authority. "Look at me Adam." He said moving in front of the kid. Adam finally meeting his eyes.

"Nigel. You're wearing dogs."

"Yeah, are you ok?"

Adam continued to rock.

"Can I touch you Adam? Do you want me to hold you?" Nigel asked - he read that it might help ground him, but that some Aspies didn't like physical contact - especially without being asked.

Adam nodded slowly and Nigel moved forward, crushing the sobbing Adam to his chest. Slowly the sobs subsided a little and Nigel could feel a damp patch where Adam's face pressed against him.

"What happened baby?" Nigel asked softly not daring to move. He wanted to stroke a hand through Adam's curls but didn't dare move in case it was too much for Adam and scared him off.

"They ruined Will's clothes. I told him I didn't want to come." Adam sobbed. "Stupid Adam. I shouldn't have believed the red girl. Stupid Adam, everyone lies."

"Freddie Lounds?" Nigel asked. "Fucking Freddys - both of them a waste of space." He had a good idea of who was behind all this - Freddie Lounds and Freddy Chilton were together and just as bad as each other. "It's ok Adam, I've got you. You want me to take you home?"

Adam didn't answer for a few minutes but his sobbing stopped and he finally nodded. "Yes please."

\*

Will felt his face burn in anger as he saw Nigel walking with Adam through the car park. Not just walking, practically hugging his cousin as they walked arm in arm - Nigel clearly supporting the worse for wear boy.

"What did you do?" Will all but shouted at Nigel as he came close to them and saw the state of Adam. His face was red and streaked with tears, his shirt a mess and a ruined jacket in his hands. He stopped immediately as he saw Adam shrink back against Nigel.

"Not you Adam, I know you didn't do anything wrong. What happened..."

He watched as Nigel looked down as Adam's lip began to quiver and then stepped forward at an angle, so that he was between the cousins. "Freddy Chilton ruined his clothes, he wants to go home."

"Fucking Freddy, I knew it!" Will cursed.

"I'm going to smash the little..." Nigel started but Hannibal cut him off, stepping from behind Will.

"Freddy has already been *smashed* for now. I suggest you leave that for another day and take Adam home for now." Hannibal smiled a small but firm smile at Nigel who gave a curt nod in return.

"Wait a minute..." Will started to object, not sure what Hannibal was playing at but this wasn't ok. Nigel was still a bully, they had no idea what he was doing with Adam - maybe he was in on this whole thing and could be up to anything.

Nigel ignored him and carried on walking, Adam all too eager to remain ensconced at his side. Will stepped forward but Hannibal put a hand on his shoulder to stop him.

“They’re fine Will. That boy, Nigel, clearly has Adam’s best interests in mind. He may be a bully, but perhaps he will be good for Adam, he certainly doesn’t seem scared of him. Trust Adam, Will!” The last words were firmer, reminding Will of his behaviour over this whole issue.

\*

Nigel had intended to drop Adam at his door, but didn’t want to upset the kid with a refusal when he invited him in.

“My dad will be at work... Will you stay until he comes home, I don’t want to be alone.” Adam’s voice had quivered and Nigel was not going to say no. He had a feeling he might never be able to say no to Adam Raki.

That’s how he had ended up falling asleep on Adam’s sofa with Adam curled up to him, watching some documentary about space.

# Adam and Nigel

## Chapter Summary

What comes after Homecoming for Will and Hannibal, Adam and Nigel and those bloody Freddys!!

## Chapter Notes

Ok, calling it a day on this installment, but have decided to spin this off into a series. Got quite a few ideas though so I'm going to continue through the senior year and hopefully into college. Again, writing this as and when inspiration and time allow but might take a break for now to finish up the other (more in depth) fics I'm working on.

Thanks for all the comments and kudos, so glad you've all enjoyed this :D

Adam both hates and fears Will on some level. He hates him for making him go to the dance, but is scared he will be angry that Adam ruined his suit. He doesn't want to talk to Will. He's going to be even angrier when he finds out Nigel stayed the night. Adam decides he's going to try to avoid Will for a while, until he figures it all out in his head - which might take a while.

The whole idea of it should make him sad, but instead he woke up happy, remembering how the horrible night ended with Nigel taking him home and sitting with him. Nigel had waited patiently whilst Adam showered and changed, and then had watch space shows with him, and they had talked a bit. Adam found it strange that they had barely talked before, and yet he really liked Nigel already, from that first meeting. A sort of like that made his chest warm and occasionally made his crotch warm too, which he wondered if he should mention to Nigel but decided against it for now. He liked hearing about Romania, and Nigel told him some of the bad stuff he had done - he had been expelled from 5 other schools for a variety of bad behaviour such as bullying and even having drugs. Adam knew that should bother him, but it didn't because that wasn't who Nigel was to him. He had asked Nigel about what Freddy had said about being his bitch, Nigel's face had gone red and Adam wasn't sure if it was anger or embarrassment. He explained that he had asked the other school bullies to leave Adam alone, which explained why Adam's time at the school had so far been pain free. Nigel was gentle in the way he talked and treated him, holding him close on the sofa because he still felt a little off. Nigel told him about working for his parents at their nightclub and how they would instead send him back to his grandparents in Romania if he failed the senior year, he'd already been held back a year because of his grades so they might be serious. He had seemed

sad, and Adam had immediately offered his deal again - he would help Nigel study. It was the least he could do considering Nigel had held up his end of the bargain with nothing in return so far.

Adam had woken in his own bed and knew immediately that his dad must have got home and carried him there. He could smell cooking downstairs, his dad was making breakfast so he went down. He passed the lounge on the way and looked in to see that Nigel was still asleep on the couch with a blanket pulled up over him. Adam felt really good about that and smiled at the warm feeling in his chest again.

“Adam.” An almost whisper from his dad drew him to the kitchen. His dad was cooking eggs and bacon but had set out a bowl, cereal and milk carton for Adam. “Your friend is still here. I made enough food for him too if you want to go wake him?”

Adam smiled and nodded. He paused for a moment to take in his dad’s expression, trying to read it. His dad noticed and smiled with a curt nod - dad was ok with his friend staying over. Adam realised he was probably just happy to see Adam had made a friend. His first friend really since he was little, other than Will of course. When he was little it was easy to have friends, children are honest and straight forward - it was only as he got older that his peers realised he wasn’t the same as them, then he didn’t have friends any more.

Adam stopped next to the sofa and looked at Nigel for a moment, he was snoring lightly and looked slightly awkward in how he was splayed across the sofa that was a bit too small for him to sleep on. Adam put his hand lightly on Nigel’s shoulder to which his new friend jumped, suddenly awake and sitting up right in the chair. Adam jumped back in surprise.

“Adam?” Nigel asked, seeming a little confused. Perhaps he didn’t remember falling asleep. His hair was all mussed up and Adam found he wanted to put his hands in it and smooth it down, just to feel it. He didn’t because he knew some people, like himself, didn’t like to be touched. He wasn’t sure how Nigel would feel about it and wondered if he should ask.

“You fell asleep. Dad’s making breakfast.” Adam explained with a smile. He started towards the kitchen with Nigel now in tow.

“Good morning.” Adam’s dad smiled at Nigel and indicated a chair at the breakfast bar. There was a setting next to Adam’s cereal. Nigel sat down and Adam quickly took his chair next to him as Mr Raki started dishing up food.

“Uh, hi.” Nigel started. “Thanks Mr Raki.” He looked down at the food and perhaps it was a little awkward but Adam wasn’t quite sure.

“This is my friend Nigel, dad.” Adam explained, to which his dad gave a smile.

After a moment of silence, perhaps Nigel didn’t like too much silence, he turned to Adam. “Aren’t you having eggs and bacon?”

“No, I like my cereal. I, um, I like to have routine and things I like, I don’t like to deviate.” Adam tried to explain, hoping Nigel didn’t think he was too weird.

But Nigel just nodded and smiled. "Oh, I get it, ok. Autism, ok." He took a bite of the food. "This is really good Mr Raki, I appreciate it."

Adam saw his dad smile and nod as he dished up his own food and sat opposite the boys.

"You went with Adam to the dance?" He asked.

"Um, not exactly. But uh..." Nigel looked a little red again and Adam hoped he wouldn't tell his dad what happened with the bullies. He would tell his dad, but right now was not the time, he didn't want to get people mad over what happened to Will's clothes and he didn't want his dad to send him to a new school because of the bullies.

"We met up once we got there." Adam explained.

"That's nice, I hope you kids had a nice time."

"It was... nice to spend time with Adam." Nigel supplied with a smile, which he turned on Adam and Adam could feel himself go a little red.

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Nigel had felt a little bereft when he left the Raki house. He had helped clear up after breakfast and Adam's dad had asked if his parents knew where he was. He had text them when he got to Adam's last night to say he was with a friend so they wouldn't be too surprised that he hadn't come home. He felt a bit down to be leaving Adam - he'd really enjoyed spending time with him. He had told him about some of his past, a lot of which he'd never discussed with anyone but he didn't feel judged by Adam. In return Adam had told him what it had been like being bullied at his old school, and how scared he had been when he had been cornered in the bathroom at the dance. Nigel felt like shit over that - in the past he could have easily been the one bullying Adam. He somehow knew he didn't need to say that to Adam, but Adam knew - maybe he made him feel safe - a bully of his own. And that was true, he was Adam's. Had been since that first smile. He had been obsessed, he knew, and maybe had even crossed some lines of social propriety by pretty much stalking the kid. But having spent the evening talking, he knew he had been right to fall for that smile and the sense of the person he had behind it, because - Adam fucking Raki.

As he drove home, Nigel thought maybe he should leave Adam alone for the weekend - see him at school. He didn't want to come across too full on, as he knew he could. From what he had read about autism he didn't want to overwhelm Adam by coming on too strong - which he knew was definitely one of his failings. It's the fucking love.

He resolved to wait to see Adam. Which was ok, because he had other stuff he needed to do. A couple of people he needed to visit.

\*

Will's weekend was a mixed bag. The dance was pretty much a disaster - which appeared to be his fault. He had been worried about Adam leaving with Nigel, but Hannibal had talked him around on the way to the hotel, where not a lot of talking was had at all. Will ended up

resolving to just let Adam do his own thing and deal with the consequences if something bad happened, rather than expecting it. It seemed reasonable but Nigel was still a bully, so Will was going to keep a close eye on his cousin even if he did back off over the Nigel issue. Adam trusted him enough to let him give comfort when he was flipping out, so that should be good enough for him - he'd have to keep reminding himself of that!

The next morning had been the opposite of the night before and he had forgotten pretty much everything about the dance. They had woken in the hotel room - a snazzy place that Hannibal paid for out of the ridiculous fortune he called an allowance. The bed was such a waste - a massive thing the size of at least two kings together, of which they maybe used 10%, having spent the night as close as possible. It had been a big deal for Will - they had been intimate before - kissing, touching, hand jobs, blow jobs. All stolen moments when parents weren't home or when he could persuade/seduce Hannibal into the backseat of the car. But they had this night planned for so long, and though Will knew that Hannibal had no expectations beyond their current level of intimacy, Will had wanted to take the next step.

It maybe hadn't been what Will had expected. It was good, no it was better than good, it was amazing. Hannibal had kissed him gently, all over. They had taken it slow and he could still feel Hannibal's hands and mouth on his skin when they woke up entwined in each other. Hannibal had kept making sure he was ok, which was hard to answer with how stimulated he was. Although he couldn't understand what it was like to be Adam, he had his own similar issues, if not as severe. Socialising was hard for him, meeting new people and letting them close, touching - it could all be too much for him too. It had taken him years to make friends with his tight group of Bev, Brian and Jimmy - so much so that it had amazed him how quickly his relationship had happened with Hannibal. Their evening surprised and amazed him in the same way - how was Hannibal even possible?!

He had been thinking that, satisfyingly sore in places he didn't even know he could be, as he'd woken draped over Hannibal's chest. This was the first time they'd really been able to explore each other so extensively, and the first time they'd woken up together. Will took the opportunity to run his fingers through the hair on Hannibal's chest - so unlike his own boyish smoothness. Hannibal woke with a smile and pressed a kiss to Will's mussed curls before drawing his arms around him.

"Good morning." He murmured, his accent thickened with sleep.

Will just hummed in contentment and snuggled closer.

"Shall we order room service?" Hannibal asked.

Will smiled and nodded, thinking about feeding a fruit salad to Hannibal in the bed, maybe licking drips of fruity syrup from his boyfriend's skin. The thought was short lived as the reality set in. "I can't believe that this is it. Once we get home we won't have this. I wish I could wake up with you every day."

Hannibal pulled Will up into a kiss. "I feel the same." He responded as they broke apart. "I could talk with my parents again?"

Will nodded but didn't comment, not holding out much hope. His own dad didn't have much have an issue - he'd just advised an embarrassed Will to 'be safe'. Hannibal's parents were another matter. It had taken quite some doing for them to agree to the hotel after homecoming. The Count was a diplomat on many levels and was big on appropriate appearances and maintaining their public image. His son having underage sex under his own roof did not factor in that - always aware of the occasional paparazzi that showed up in their lives to check in on the US based aristocracy. The Count had bemoaned more than once his annoyance at the American obsession with such things. Will could understand it - after all he had kept a clipping from a trashy rag you could buy at the supermarket checkout - The Tattler. In the 'Spotted' pages was a picture a pap had taken of Hannibal with a long lens - he was next to their pool wearing a pair of swimming trunks. The Tattler had declared him 'one to watch' for those hoping to bag themselves looks, money and title once the young heir reached majority. The Count had gone mad, sued the rag and had better fences erected around the property. Again, understandable, even if Hannibal had laughed with delight when he discovered the clipping stuck to Will's bedroom wall along with a the few photos of them together and photos of Will's friends and family. The clipping had pride of place on the wall.

Hannibal evidently decided to break the silence that had fallen, with gentle, teasing kisses. As he drew Will to him thoughts of room service, and going home, apologising to Adam - it all dissipated. There was just Hannibal.

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"Will... Will." Will turned to see Bev striding down the hall towards him. He closed his locker as she reached him - a look of concerned excitement on her face. "Did you hear? About Chilton and Lounds?" Will's look obviously betrayed his confusion because she continued before he had a chance to finish his negative response. "Nigel saw them over the weekend. They were at Duke's Bowling Alley... I don't know the details but basically he handcuffed them to the emergency exit out the back. They were there for hours before the manager found them when he closed up. Chilton also had a black eye apparently."

"What the hell?" Will found himself torn between an 'I told you so' over Nigel's behaviour, and admiration at the revenge he had sought for Adam. "Does Adam know?"

"I haven't seen him." Bev shrugged, though her look was one of concern. "But I saw Nigel - Ms Smith was taking him to the principal's office. I'm guessing they aren't going to be too happy with this even if it was outside of school."

Will was nodding absentmindedly as his thoughts went to Adam. "I'm going to look for Adam." He said aloud as the bell for first period sounded. Bev nodded and headed to her class. Will took out the copy of Adam's schedule that Adam had copied for him on his first day in case Will should ever need it. Will found Adam in class, a quick peek in the window before the teacher spotted him. He'd have to wait until the class was over as there was no way to really get Adam out without causing a stir.

"Shouldn't you be in class Mr Graham?" Ms Smith's voice came from behind him. He turned to see her with Nigel, who gave him a wry smile.

"Uh, bathroom..." Will explained, hoping she didn't ask for a hall pass.

“Uhuh, well, get to it then.” She seemed to be finding her day a little bit too much trouble. Will nodded and started slowly down the hall.

“Which one’s yours? Do you need a box to empty it out?” Ms Smith asked and Will heard a locker open.

“No, not much in it.” Nigel replied. He cleared his throat and Will looked back and caught his eye. “Is this necessary? How long am I suspended for?” He asked, as his eyes met Will’s.

“Mrs Johnson will decide that with that with the school board. You’re lucky not to be expelled. You would have been if either of them were pressing charges.” She huffed with annoyance, Nigel was obviously not her favourite pupil.

Will had held back as long as he could without drawing attention, he gave a quick nod to Nigel before entering the bathroom.

When classes let out Will found Adam immediately and grabbed his elbow, steering him from the crowd and towards the quad.

“Will!” Adam responded to the physical contact with a shocked sound and a whimper, but Will didn’t let go until they were outside. At which point his heart broke to see his cousin’s face crumble.

“I’m sorry Will. I didn’t mean to ruin your suit. Please don’t be mad...”

Will grabbed Adam’s shoulders to ground him. “It’s all ok Adam. Don’t worry about the suit. I’m sorry. I’m really sorry about everything. I shouldn’t have made you come to the dance, and I shouldn’t have stopped you being friends with Nigel. I still don’t like him, but it’s your choice not mine. I’m sorry.”

Adam looked him in the eye for a moment and smiled. “Ok. But I am sorry about your suit. I could buy a new one...”

“No Adam, it wasn’t your fault. If I want a new one I’ll be getting it from Freddy Chilton! Please don’t worry about it.” Will smiled but then took a breath. “Adam, I need to tell you though... Nigel is in trouble.”

\*

Will had explained everything he knew about what had happened with Nigel and the Freddys. Adam had nodded and then gone immediately to the principal to explain what had happened at the dance and speak in Nigel’s defense. She had reacted strangely - perhaps surprise - and Adam could understand why. He was a good student and it might seem odd that he was sticking up for a bully, but he was sure she would understand once he explained they were friends and although Nigel had done a bad thing, Freddy Chilton had also done a bad thing. She had thanked him and told him she would keep it in mind whilst they decided about Nigel.

It had been a long morning after that. He had considered several times skipping class to go to see Nigel, but he just couldn’t do that. His routine was already off from getting to class late

after seeing Mrs Johnson, and he was still feeling fragile from the night of the dance. As it was it felt like an eternity before lunchtime arrived and he went to find Will. With little persuasion, Jimmy had mentioned he had a rough idea where Nigel lived and would drive him there during lunch. Will went with them even though all three were silent in the car.

“I think it’s this one.” Jimmy said when they pulled up. “It used to be on my paper route for the people who lived here before. I’m sure it was Nigel’s family that moved in.”

Adam nodded and thanked Jimmy before getting out of the car. Once he was at the gate he felt nervous. It was a nice house, not big like Hannibal’s but a nice house on a nice street - the family business must do well. He urged himself on with the thought of seeing Nigel, finally reaching the door and knocking. He hadn’t seen Nigel since the morning after the dance and he had been too nervous to ask to see him again at the weekend. He had been excited about seeing him at school, if a little worried that they would go back to not talking. He hoped they really were friends now. They had to be if Nigel had taken it upon himself to do what he did to the Freddys.

After a minute the door opened to reveal Nigel. And reveal was the correct word. He looked a little mussed up and he was just wearing sweat pants and nothing else. Adam swallowed and felt a twinge in his crotch at the sight of his friend’s bare and slightly sweaty chest.

“Adam!” Nigel beamed and pulled Adam into the house. “I was just working out, weight training... I, I really wanted to see you today, but the teachers caught up with me first.” He laughed.

“Nigel.” Adam said firmly, frowning at his friend now. This was serious! “You did a bad thing, you’re lucky not to be expelled! I thought you want to finish senior year.” Adam felt a little disappointed, he didn’t want Nigel to have lied to him.

“I do darling.” Nigel told him, drawing Adam to him with one arm around his shoulders. “That’s why they got off so lightly, and why I wasn’t stupid enough to do it at school. It’ll be a few week’s suspension at most. I speak from experience.” Nigel grinned.

Adam was torn. He wanted to tell Nigel off, it was a bad thing he did. But he also felt another twinge in his crotch at Nigel’s grin. As Nigel looked down at him with a smile Adam bit his lower lip trying to work it out. Nigel’s smile dropped slightly and he licked his lips - Adam watching intently. Before he had time to think about it, he closed the little distance between them, leaning up to press a quick kiss to Nigel’s lips. Realising what he had done, he pulled back quickly, Nigel’s arm falling away.

“I’m sorry, I... I like you. Um, I should have asked. I just, I feel sexually excited and I assumed you did too, which I shouldn’t. I should know better, I should have asked...” Adam started to go around in circles, running his hands up and down his arms.

Nigel placed his hands over Adam’s, stopping them in their motions. “It’s ok Adam, I get it...”

“I just assumed. I know I shouldn’t. I’m meant to ask. It’s this thing... I forget to ask still sometimes but I’m getting better at it...”

“Mindblindness.” Nigel nodded. “I read about it. I understand. It’s ok.” He smiled and Adam felt a bit calmer. “Besides, you were right this time...” He leaned in and kissed Adam.

Chaste at first, then a little more pressure. Adam could feel he was holding back, maybe worried about how Adam would react to the physical contact. He felt a little overwhelmed, but in a strange way - he found he wanted more of the contact even so. More kissing. As Nigel began to pull back, Adam leapt forward, his arms grabbing up around Nigel’s neck and pressing himself to the boy. Adam couldn’t help the half delighted, half surprised sound as Nigel’s mouth devoured his - his tongue slipping gently into Adam’s mouth.

Adam pulled back for breath. The kiss, and the fact that both he and Nigel were very hard - he could feel as they pressed together - was a little overwhelming if nice.

“I have to go...um, Will and Jimmy are waiting.”

Nigel had allowed the small distance Adam had put between them, but leaned in slightly to rest his face in Adam’s hair. “Tell them to go on, Will can explain that you’re sick.” He muttered into the curls.

“But... I’m not sick.” Adam replied, a little confused.

“Spend the afternoon with me Adam. We don’t have to do anything you don’t want to... I’d just like to spend time with you.”

“But... I shouldn’t miss class... I’m not sick...” Adam had never felt torn like this before. He wanted to stay with Nigel but knew it was bad.

“Just this once.” Nigel said, pulling back to look into Adam’s eyes. “Please?”

Adam wasn’t good at reading people’s faces, or even knowing whether their words were truthful, but he knew his own feelings and perhaps it was mindblindness, but he knew Nigel wanted him to stay because he needed a friend right now. After the dance, the upset with Will, Nigel getting into trouble for him - so did Adam.

“Ok.” Adam finally agreed and went back to the car to tell Will.

\*

“Adam...” Nigel said softly. “I need to take you home. It’s late, your dad will worry.” It was getting to dinner time and Nigel knew Adam had text his dad and was expected home for dinner.

Nigel looked down at Adam, who was starting to stir. He had fallen asleep curled up on Nigel’s chest as they watched TV. Now he blinked his eyes open and nodded with a yawn. It had been an unusual and unexpected afternoon in all and Nigel wasn’t surprised that Adam had nodded off - if anything he had felt elated that Adam was comfortable enough to fall asleep in his arms.

Earlier Adam had eaten his packed lunch whilst Nigel had a shower. They had settled on the sofa and kissed some more, until Adam was a bit overwhelmed and so they stopped. That

happened a few times and with anyone else Nigel might give up on them as a tease. But that wasn't Adam - he was happy to go as slowly as he needed, anything not to scare Adam off. He was already amazed that the boy was interested in him, especially after what he had done to Chilton and Lounds. He may not be the bully everyone made him out to be, but he wasn't a good kid and yet Adam didn't mind.

In the late afternoon he had got a call from the school. They wanted to talk to his parents but they were both working at the club until the late evening. The secretary informed him he was suspended for a week, which was pretty good going, and that Chilton was as well for bullying Adam. Adam had been really happy with this news and more kissing had ensued, this time Adam's hand straying south to press curiously against Nigel's crotch for a few long moments before he pulled back hesitantly. Nigel had just smiled, he wasn't going to think it was more than it was, he wouldn't feel led on and push for more because this was enough. Whatever Adam wanted to give, when he was ready to give it. Adam had returned the smile. And that smile was fucking glorious.

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